

**Illinois Reads Activity for *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art***

**Author:** Barb Rosenstock

Barb Rosenstock was born on April Fool's Day! She writes narrative non-fiction and historical fiction picture books. You can learn more about Barb Rosenstock's likes at <http://barbrosenstock.com/about-me/>. She lives in Chicago with her husband, sons, and poodles. You can find a list of her books at <https://www.smore.com/z6h0v-author-study-implementation-plan>.

**Illustrator:** Mary GrandPre'

Mary GrandPre' would be well known by children for her Harry Potter illustrations. She has illustrated seven other children's books. She classifies her art as "soft geometry" which made her a perfect illustrator for *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art*, since Kandinsky art was considered "Improvisation" or "Abstract Art". You can learn more about Mary GrandPre' and see examples of her art work at <http://www.marygrandpre.com/>.

**Websites:**

The Noisy Paint Box Activity Guide

[https://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/TheNoisyPaintbox\\_Guide\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/TheNoisyPaintbox_Guide_WEB.pdf)

The Classroom Bookshelf

<http://classroombookshelf.blogspot.com/2014/03/the-noisy-paint-box-colors-and-sounds.html>

Lesson Plan: First Center for the Visual Arts (Nashville Museum)

[http://fristcenter.org/content/uploads/pdf\\_downloads/NPT\\_ArtQuest\\_Lesson\\_Plan\\_Season\\_II\\_Unity\\_Lesson\\_Plan\\_FINAL\\_with\\_image.pdf](http://fristcenter.org/content/uploads/pdf_downloads/NPT_ArtQuest_Lesson_Plan_Season_II_Unity_Lesson_Plan_FINAL_with_image.pdf)

Summary: The author weaves a very effective biography in this amazing picture book, *The Noisy Paint Box*, the story of Vasava Kandinsky. Vasava was moved to paint the sounds he heard in music and what he heard, but at that time everyone thought paintings should show houses and flowers! Vasava thought that art should show how you feel! Vasava Kandinsky did go to college and he did become a lawyer, but he eventually quit teaching law, and began to study art. He eventually became a very famous artist. In the Author's Note, Barb Rosenstock, explains that Kandinsky may have had a harmless genetic condition, called synesthesia, but there were not tests to find that out when Kandinsky was alive. People that have this condition have one sense that triggers another sense, like Kandinsky experienced when he painted—he heard music and sounds in his paintings.

Activity:

1. Look at the cover of this book:
  - a. What do you notice?
  - b. Let's look at the title, who do you think this boy is?

- c. What do you see coming from his paint box?
  - d. Do you think this story takes place now or in the past?
2. As you read this story, pay attention to the Font. The font changes as Vasya is doing what he is “supposed” to do to what he is feeling, hearing, and thinking.
3. After reading the story:
  - a. How was Vasya taught to behave?
  - b. What did people keep asking him about his art?
  - c. What do you notice about the way the book is illustrated?
  - d. Look at the page where Vasya is running down the steps with his picture. Look at the conversations taking place, why do you think the illustrator drew the flowers wilting in the vase.
  - e. What does Vasya experience when he hears music?
  - f. Look at the picture where people are looking at his art. What do you think they are saying to each other? Why do you think the illustrator wrote words across Kandinsky’s art work.
4. This book is perfect for integrating art and music. Work with the art teacher and music teacher to integrate literacy, art, and music!
5. Look at other abstract work by Kandinsky and other artists. What do they notice about similarities and differences.
6. Listen to some of the types of music he loves: Imporvisation, Composition, Accompaniment, Fugue, Movement, and Three Sounds.
7. What do the students see and feel as they listen to the music? Let them paint their own abstract art.